

Message Text

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PAGE 01 REYKJA 00154 231817Z

63

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SUBJECT: IMPACT OF UNION ELECTION ON DEFENSE AND ECONOMIC
ISSUES

1. IN ELECTIONS FOR OFFICIAL OF AKUREYRI TRADE UNION
FEDERATION, SLATE INCLUDING BJORN JONSSON, OLL MINISTER FOR
SOCIAL AFFAIRS AND TRANSPORTATION, WON TWO-TO-ONE VICTORY.
BECAUSE OF IMPACT ON CABINET IN CURRENT SITUATION, THIS
ELECTION HAS IMPORTANCE IN ECONOMIC AND DEFENSE AFFAIRS WELL
BEYOND CONTROL OF ONE LOCAL UNION GROUPING.

2. WHEN BJORN JONSSON ENTERED NATIONAL CABINET, HE RESIGNED
AS HEAD OF AKUREYRI TRADE UNION FEDERATION. HIS DEPUTY, WHO
IS MEMBER OF COMMUNIST-DOMINATED PEOPLE'S ALLIANCE, MOVED UP TO
REPLACE HIM. IT SOON BECAME CLEAR THAT NEW LEADERSHIP WAS
MOVING TO GAIN FULL CONTROL OF FEDERATION FOR PEOPLE'S ALLIANCE
AND TO SET STAGE FOR ELECTIONS WHICH WOULD CONFIRM THAT
CONTROL. JONSSON SAW HIS POWER BASE AND ONE OF MOST IMPORTANT
BASES FOR HIS ORGANIZATION OF LIBERALS AND LEFTISTS DISAPPEARING.

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RIVAL SLATE WAS QUICKLY ORGANIZED WITH JONSSON'S NAME ON IT

IN "HONORARY LAST" POSITION, THUS CLEARLY INDICATING TO MEMBER-SHIP WHICH SLATE HE FAVORED. IMPORTANT TO HIS VICTORY WAS SUPPORT OBTAINED FROM SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC, INDEPENDENCE AND PROGRESSIVE PARTIES. IT WAS UNIQUE EXAMPLE OF COOPERATION BY TWO OPPOSITION AND TWO GOVERNMENT PARTIES TO DEFEAT PEOPLE'S ALLIANCE.

3. IMPORTANCE OF VICTORY LIES IN STRENGTHENING OF JONSSON AND HIS PARTY AT CRITICAL PERIOD IN GENERAL WAGE AND DEFENSE NEGOTIATIONS. AS FORMER CHAIRMAN OF ICELANDIC FEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS, JONSSON MUST REPRESENT LABOR INTERESTS IN CABINET AGAINST PA MINISTERS WHO ARE DETERMINED TO HOLD DOWN WAGE INCREASES TO FIGHT INFLATION. PREVIOUSLY-EXISTING BAD FEELING BETWEEN OLL AND PA MINISTERS HAS CLEARLY BEEN WORSENERD.

4. WHILE OLL MINISTERS IN CABINET HAVE SO FAR KEPT THEIR OWN COUNCIL ON DEFENSE MATTERS, THEIR POSITION IS PIVOTAL. THERE HAS, HOWEVER, BEEN REASON TO BELIEVE THEY FAVOR MAKING SOME ARRANGMENT WITH USG WHICH WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE TO BOTH SIDES. IT IS GENERALLY SAID LOCALLY THAT ANYTHING PA MINISTER MAGNUS KJARTANSSON SUPPORTS, BJORN JONSSON ALMOST AUTOMATICALLY OPPOSES. IF THAT IS CASE, HIS STRENGTHENED POSITION IN HIS HOME AREA AND RESULTING ILL FEELING BETWEEN HIM AND PA COULD BE TO US BENEFIT.
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